

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, AR

SUBJECT: LABATT'S INTERVIEW WITH MINLABOR LIENDO

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2991

1. OUTGOING AND INCOMING EMBASSY LABATTS HELD HALF-HOUR MEETING WITH MINLABOR LIENDO EVENING MAY 6. LIENDO WAS PERSONABLE AND CORDIAL, BUT SINGULARLY UNCOMMUNICATIVE REGARDING GOA POLICY TOWARDS ORGANIZED LABOR. HE KEPT TO GENERALITIES AND DEFTLY SIDESTEPED SPECIFIC QUESTIONS. SUBSTANCE HIS OBSERVATIONS FOLLOWS.

2. LIENDO STATED THAT NORMALIZATION AND REORGANIZATION OF LABOR MOVEMENT WOULD FOLLOW REVISION OF TRADE UNION LAW OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER LABOR CODES. WHETHER GOA WOULD OPT FOR ONE, THREE, FIVE LABOR CENTRALS OR MORE STILL HAD NOT BEEN DECIDED. HOWEVER, IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSION LIENDO SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE EXISTENCE OF MORE THAN ONE CENTRAL WOULD GUARANTEE THE CREATION OF AT LEAST ONE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LABOR CENTRAL. "THAT IS THE PROBLEM", HE EMPHASIZED IN ENGLISH. LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAL) WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REVISIONS, IN THE LABOR LAWS, HE CONTINUED. WHEN ASKED WHO WOULD BE CAL'S ADVISORS FOR SUCH REVISIONS, HE LAUGHED AND SAID HE HIMSELF WOULD BE. HOWEVER, THE FINAL DECISION ON TRADE UNION REORGANIZATION POLICY LAY WITH "HIGHER AUTHORITY", AS THE DECISION WOULD BE EMINENTLY POLITICAL.

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3. CONCERNING FORTHCOMING ILO CONFERENCE, LIENDO SAID HE ASSUMED THERE WOULD BE TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION BUT THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN ON MEANS OF SELECTION OF DELEGATION. HE SAID GOA WAS FULLY CONFIDENT THAT ITS NATIONAL POLICIES WERE PROPER ONES, THAT ARGENTINA WAS NOT LIKE THE OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, AND THAT GOA WOULD BE ABLE TO FEND OFF CRITICISM AND DEFEND ITSELF AT ILOM ON THORNY ISSUE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, LIENDO SAID HE EXPECTED THAT BY TIME OF ILO MEETING GOA WOULD BE PREPARED TO RELEASE AND DOCUMENTED CHARGES AGAINST THOSE UNDER DETENTION.

4. WHEN ASKED WHAT GOA POLICY WAS TOWARDS ARGENTINE LABOR HOSTING AND/OR PARTICIPATING IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCES, LIENDO FIELDDED QUESTION BY OBSERVING THAT ALL UNION ACTIVITY WAS STILL SUSPENDED AND DECISION ON SUCH ACTIVITIES WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT REVISION LABOR LAWS AND REORGANIZATION LABOR MOVEMENT. HE SAID FROM TECHNICAL VIEWPOINT, SUCH REORGANIZATION COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN SIX MONTHS, BUT THAT AS IT WAS POLITICAL DECISION HE COULD GIVE NO IDEA AS TO HOW MUCH ADDITIONAL TIME MIGHT BE NEEDED. THROUGHOUT ENTIRE CONVERSATION HE REITERATED THAT HE OPERATED AT TECHNICAL LEVEL AND THAT MILITARY JUNTA ITSELF WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR POLITICAL DECISIONS.

5. WHILE WAITING FOR MEETING WITH MINLABOR, LABATTS HELD SHORT CONVERSATION WITH LIENDO'S AIDE, A CAPTAIN. THE CAPTAIN MADE OBSERVATION THAT MILITARY HAD HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO INTERVENE UNIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR EXCESSES AND ABUSES. HE SAID HE NOW HOPED THAT THE PENDULUM WOULD NOT SWING TOO FAR THE OTHER WAY PERMITTING THE BUSINESS SECTOR TO BE AS ABUSIVE AS HAD BEEN THE LABOR SECTOR. THE CAPTAIN ALSO TOLD LABATTS THAT HE AND VAST MAJORITY OF MILITARY NOW CARRYING OUT GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS WERE STUDENTS FROM VARIOUS MILITARY SCHOOLS; THEREFORE, THE COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE MILITARY HAD NOT BEEN AFFECTED. HE SAID MINLABOR LIENDO WAS THE ONLY GOA OFFICIAL WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM A COMMAND POST, BUT THAT AS HIS COMMAND HAD BEEN IN THE NEUQUEN-BARILOCHE AREA, IT HAD NO EFFECT ON MILITARY DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS.

6. COMMENT. LABATTS LEFT MEETING WITH LIENDO WITH IMPRESSION THAT GOA HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON EXTENT OF REORGANIZATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF LABOR MOVEMENT, BUT THAT IT WILL NOT BE RUSHED INTO ANY DECISIONS. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE CURRENT GOA, AT LEAST, IS BENT ON REMOLDING ORGANIZED LABOR RATHER THAN DESTROYING THE MOVEMENT ENTIRELY.

7. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION, FOECYT SEC GEN BALDASSINI TOLD LABATTS THAT THE GOA IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPECTRE OF INTERNATIONAL ATTACKS AGAINST ARGENTINA AT THE ILO CONFERENCE

AND HAS ENTERED INTO CONVERSATIONS WITH UNION LEADERS AIMED
AT SELECTING A UNION DELEGATION TO REPRESENT ARGENTINE LABOR
AT THE CONFERENCE AND THUS HELPING TO MUTE THE ATTACKS.
BALDASSINI STATED THAT HE AND OTHER UNION LEADERS WHO ARE
TALKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT HOPE TO EXTRACT GOA CONCESSIONS
WITH RESPECT TO THE SHAPE OF FUTURE ARGENTINA TRADE UNION
STRUCTURE IN RETURN FOR A COMMITMENT TO SEND A UNION DELEGATION
TO GENEVA.

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